

*Reviews for Africa Programme (RAP):
Training in the Science of Research
Synthesis for Cochrane authors of
systematic reviews*

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Background

- A 2004 survey of Cochrane authors from developing countries identified training, mentorship, and practical assistance as priorities
- The South African Cochrane Centre, Cochrane Infectious Diseases Group, and Cochrane HIV/AIDS Group responded with the Reviews for Africa Programme (RAP), funded by the Nuffield Commonwealth Programme





Aim

- To prepare Cochrane Reviews with a strategic focus on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases or issues relevant to Africa
- To build capacity in research synthesis in the African region
- A subsidiary output is to promote evidence-based health care policy and practice in the region

Eligibility




Programme components

- Focus on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria
- Three phases
 - 4-week Protocol development course 
 - Publication of the protocol and initial preparation of the Cochrane Review 
 - 3-week Review completion course 
- Monitoring and evaluation 


Phase 1: Development of a protocol for a Cochrane Review alongside training in research synthesis

Objective: To equip participants with knowledge and research synthesis skills necessary for initiating, completing, and maintaining a Cochrane Review

Outline: A combination of seminars, workshops, computer sessions, tutorials, and individual study will enable each participant to complete the protocol of a Cochrane Review to the stage where it is ready to be sent off for peer review 

Phase 2: Publication of the protocol and initial preparation of the Cochrane Review

Objective: To complete protocol and draft the full Cochrane Review

Outline: Individual study at participant's home institution with support from an assigned mentor and South African Cochrane Centre. Duration of 6 to 8 months 

Phase 3: Cochrane Review finishing school

Objective: To complete the Cochrane Review and submit to the editorial base for peer review

Outline: Protected time for individual study supplemented with seminars and tutorials

Outputs

OUTPUT	NATURE OF TARGET
To prepare Cochrane systematic reviews	Protocol of review published in <i>The Cochrane Library</i>
	Completed review published in <i>The Cochrane Library</i>
Build capacity in research synthesis	Attended protocol development 4-week course
	Attended review completion 3-week course
	Became a mentor or co-author of systematic reviews
	Conducted training sessions in home or other countries
	Policy-advisor, eg advice given on evidence-based approach in local hospital, district, province, or nationally
Promote evidence-based health care policy and practice in the region	Completed review being used in home country
	Review cited
	Review accessed in <i>The Cochrane Library</i>



Anticipated yearly outputs

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Phase 1: 6 participants in year 1 and then 8 per year for year 2 to 4					
Protocol in <i>The Cochrane Library</i> : 6 in year 2 and then 8 per year for year 3 to 5					
Phase 3: 6 participants in year 2 and then 8 per year for year 3 to 5					
Review in <i>The Cochrane Library</i> : 6 in year 3 and then 8 per year for year 4 to 6					
Became a mentor or co-author of systematic reviews					
Conducted training sessions in home or other countries					
			Policy-advisor		
			Review being used in home country		
			Review cited		
			Review accessed on <i>The Cochrane Library</i>		

Progress

2005	2006	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Phase 1: 5 participants in year 1 and 7 in year 2					
		4 Protocols in <i>The Cochrane Library</i>			
		Phase 3: 5 participants			
		2 reviews in peer review			
		2 participants are co-authors of new reviews and one a mentor for a new review			
		Training sessions in Kenya and Nigeria AND contribution to Nigerian Branch of South African Cochrane Centre			
					
			Policy advisor		
			Review being used in home country		
			Review cited		
			Review accessed on <i>The Cochrane Library</i>		



Course evaluation

- Focus groups and weekly evaluation forms
- Valuable to identify ways to improve efficiency of the course

Conclusion

- Achieving outputs
- Good model
- Cochrane Review Groups should consider how they can build on this approach in partnerships with skilled groups in developing countries to promote research synthesis